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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 ACCRA 002515

SIPDIS

STATE/OES/ETC H. LEE
STATE/EB/TPP/ABT R. SINGH
USDA/FAS/BIG JP PASSINO

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: SENV ETRD EAGR EAID TBIO GH
SUBJECT: GHANA'S RESPONSE TO CARTEGENA PROTOCOL ON BIOSAFETY: GETTING READY FOR ROUND 2

REF: A. REF A SECSTATE 259661

¶B. REF B ACCRA 01543

¶1. This cable provides an update of the Government of Ghana's (GoG) biosafety activities in 2004 in response to Ref A. Post has electronic copies of the below-referenced Biosafety Bill and Biosafety Guidelines and can forward them to interested parties upon request.

¶2. In July 2004, the GoG hosted a National Stakeholder Workshop to discuss the final draft components of the National Biosafety Framework for Ghana (Ref B). The GoG has since submitted the document to UNEP/GEF - the first of 39 African countries to complete it. This will form the basis of future biosafety regulations.

¶3. USAID has developed a Program for Biosafety Systems - a global program with West African regional components. USAID in Washington awarded management of the program to IFPRI (International Food Policy Research Institute), which will be working with Ghana to develop policies, training and details that will support the GoG's biosafety legislation.

¶4. Minister of Environment and Science Kasanga is currently reviewing the draft Biosafety bill and will soon seek Cabinet approval, after which the Attorney General will submit it to Parliament for approval. When implemented, the Bill will establish the National Biosafety Authority to process applications under the Act. The draft bill delineates the following:

Application for Contained Use

¶5. For applications for contained use, a person shall not conduct a contained use activity involving genetically modified organisms (GMO) without the written approval of the Authority. At least 60 days prior to activities, an applicant must submit an application including the location of activities; the nature and identity of the GMO involved; the nature and purpose of the activities including storing, producing, transporting, processing, disposing; a description of the potential risks associated with the activity and the remedial measure to be undertaken for unintentional release and at the activity end.

Application for Import or Introduction into the Environment

¶6. A person or organization intending to introduce a GMO into the environment or import or place a GMO on the market must first obtain the written approval of the Authority. An application must be submitted to the Authority providing the following information: name and identity of GMO and domestic classification of the biosafety level of the GMO in the country of export; intended date of transboundary movement; taxonomic status and technical names, identifier, transformations code or event, point of collection or acquisition and characteristics of the recipient organism or paternal organism related to biosafety; center of origin and center of genetic diversity, of the recipient organism and the parental organism and the description of the habitat where the organism is related to biosafety; common name, point of collection or acquisition and characteristics of the modification introduced, the technique used and the resulting characteristics of the GMO; intended use of the GMO and the products of the GMO; quantity or volume of the GMO to be transferred and released; the appropriate risk assessment report; suggested methods for the safe handling, storage, transport and use, including procedures for unintentional or accidental release; and a sworn declaration of the applicant that the above mentioned information is factually correct.

¶7. The applicant must also complete a risk assessment that entails identification of any of the genotypic and phenotypic characteristics associated with GMO that may have an adverse effect on the environment. The risk assessment must also include the following: an evaluation of the likelihood of these adverse effects being realized, taking into account the level and the kind of exposure of the likely potential

receiving environment of the GMO; an evaluation of the consequences should these effects be realized; an estimation of the overall risk posed by the GMO based on the evaluation of the likelihood and consequences of the identified adverse effects being realized; a recommendation as to whether or not the risks are acceptable or manageable, including identification of strategies to mange the risk; and where there is uncertainty regarding the level of risk, the governing body of the Authority (the Board) created by the bill may request further information on the specific issues of concern or may recommend appropriate risk management strategies and monitoring of the GMO in the receiving environment.

Other Tenets

¶8. A person or organization intending to transport a GMO through Ghana, but which is not destined for use in Ghana, must apply for written approval to the Authority.

¶9. The Authority may exempt a GMO from certain requirements above where it is satisfied that sufficient experience or information exists to conclude that the GMO or activity does not impose a significant risk to the environment. In reaching its decisions, the Board can take into account relevant comments submitted by the public and socio-economic considerations arising from the impact of the proposed activity and the GMO on the environment. The Board shall communicate its final decision to the applicant within 270 days from receipt of the application.

¶10. Please contact woodringse@state.gov for copies of the documents referenced.
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